

G.S. Prokhorov (Kolomna)
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4652-8698

WHAT SORT OF JEW DOSTOEVSKY LIKED AND DISLIKED: A NARRATIVE OF A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP

Abstract. In his fiction, journalism and letters, Dostoevsky recurrently mentions ethnicity of his protagonists. Russians, Poles, Englishmen, Germans, Turks, Greeks etc. never act as individuals with their personal life but rather as ‘carriers’ of some national idea. Amidst the nations represented in Dostoevsky’s oeuvre, there are some Jews. The fashion of how Dostoevsky portrays them was questionable even at the writer’s lifespan. Arkadii Kovner’s and Sophia Lurie’s letters to Dostoevsky are quite known as well as their direct indictment of the writer in Anti-Semitism. After 1920s, Dostoevsky’s attitude toward Jews turns into a difficult topic of Dostoevsky Studies. In the article, we trace how Dostoevsky uses words which traditionally refer to Jews and show their semantics as highly dispersed. We find the writer’s affinity to use words ‘a Jew’, ‘a Hebrew’ and even ‘an Yid’ with dubious or even without any links to real Jews. Based on private letters of Dostoevsky and his journalism, we derive two Jewish images – positive and negative – which are quite constant in the writer’s texts. Dostoevsky bindingly connects Jews with Judaism, i.e. its practises, traditions and rituals. Thus, he is mostly sympathetic to ‘serious Jews’ – traditionalists. Vice versa, he is rigorously critical to the secular ones. Dostoevsky looks at the polemics of the traditionalists and the ‘maskilim’ and perceives it as a parallel to Russian debates around the Westernization. In the both conflicts, Dostoevsky’s sympathies are with people who keep traditions while he perceives those who decline a ‘national body’ as his own ideological ‘foes’.

Key words: Dostoevsky; Jewish narrative; Anti-Semitism; assimilation; secularisation; Westernisation; the Enlightenment.

Г.С. Прохоров (Коломна)
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4652-8698

Евреи в творческом корпусе Достоевского: нарративы симпатии и антипатии

Аннотация. Национальная тематика с достаточной регулярностью звучит на страницах текстов Достоевского – его художественной прозы, публицистики, личной корреспонденции. Русские, поляки, англичане, немцы, турки, греки выступают не просто как персонажи, но и как типологические носители некоей идеи. Среди этносов, которых портретировал Достоевский, были и евреи – и работа писателя с образом евреев вызвала споры еще при его жизни. Известны письма к писателю Аркадия Ковнера и Софьи Лурье, упрекавших писателя в антисемитизме. С 1920-х гг. проблема отношения Достоевского к евреям становится одним из «трудных вопросов», сопровождающих достоевистику. В настоящей статье мы рассматриваем семантическую палитру корней, конституирующих концепт «еврей», демонстрируем их семантическую размытость, склонность Достоевского к

употреблению подобных лексем без прямой референции. На основании публицистики и личных писем мы показываем два контрастных еврейских облика (положительный и негативный), присутствующих в творческом сознании писателя. Достоевский прочно ассоциирует евреев с иудаизмом, его практиками и ритуалами. Соответственно, нейтрально-положительное отношение к ортодоксам сопровождается резко-отрицательным отношением к «светским евреям». Полемика между традиционалистами и просвещенными евреями воспринималась Достоевским как аналог и зеркало процесса европеизации в русском обществе. Точно так же симпатии писателя были на стороне сохраняющих традиции, тогда как порвавшие с «национальным телом» стабильно выступают в качестве идейных оппонентов.

Ключевые слова: Достоевский; мотив еврейства; ассимиляция; секуляризация; западничество; эпоха Просвещения.

“Я проиграл все к половине десятого и вышел как очумелый; я до того страдал, что тотчас побежал к священнику (не беспокойся, не был, не был и не пойду!). Я думал дорогою, бежа к нему, в темноте, по неизвестным улицам: ведь он пастырь божий, буду с ним говорить не как с частным лицом, а как на исповеди. Но я заблудился в городе и когда дошел до церкви, которую принял за русскую, то мне сказали в лавочке, что это не русская <...>. Меня как холодной водой облило. Прибежал домой; теперь полночь, сижу и пишу тебе. (К священнику же не пойду, не пойду, клянусь, что не пойду!) [By 9.30 p.m., I’d already lost all my money. I felt so desperate that I ran to the priest (do not worry: I had not gone to him neither then, nor will I possibly do that in future!) Rushing through the darkness and in unfamiliar streets, one single thought occupied my mind: ‘he is a God’s shepherd, I would speak to him not in a ‘small talk’ fashion but as if at a confession’. But I lost my way. When I reached the church which to me seemed a Russian one, I was told that it was in fact Jewish. This was indeed a wake up call, so I rushed home. It’s now midnight and I am sitting at my desk and writing this letter to you. (I won’t go to the priest, I swear!)] [Достоевский / Dostoevsky 1972–1990, XXIX (1), 198].

A murky but somehow funny episode of Dostoevsky’s life which happened to him in Wiesbaden in 1871. Are his feelings Judeophobic? – well, yes and no. If we look at other Dostoevsky’s letters which mention gambling, we will see a Jewish protagonist there; moreover, the protagonist is portrayed mostly positive:

“Вот мое наблюдение, Аня, окончательное: если быть благоразумным, то есть быть как из мрамора, холодным и нечеловечески осторожным, то непременно, безо всякого сомнения, можно выиграть сколько угодно <...> Есть тут один жид: он играет уже несколько дней, с ужасным хладнокровием и расчетом, нечеловеческим (мне его показывали), и его уже начинает бояться банк. [From my own experience, Anya: if you manage to keep a cool head - like that of marble – and show indeed supernatural accuracy, you can certainly win as much as you desire. <...> There is an Yid < Here and after, we use the abusive word to translate the ‘zhyd’ (“жид”) in Dostoevsky’s texts. In the 2d half of the 19th century, “zhyd” has been developing



its negative connotation and pejorativeness which are normal in the Modern Russian, meanwhile, then, its connotation was dubious because the word maintained its links to absolutely standard analogues, French 'Juif' and Polish 'Żyd' – they showed him to me. He had been playing for several days so far, with amazing cold head and premeditation (indeed, non-human). The bank is developing a fear of him.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy, 1972–1990, XXVIII (2), 186].

After a while, the writer turns the Jew into an ideal gambler, even more – into a role model for himself of which he informs his wife, Anna Grigoryevna: "...вечером, с 8 часов до 11, буду играть жидом, благоразумнейшим образом, клянусь тебе. [In the evening, from 8 to 11 p.m., I swear, am going to gamble like an Yid, i.e. with a full presence of mind"] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy, 1972–1990, XXVIII (2), 234].

Dostoevsky never creates his protagonists ex nihil. His protagonists typically emerge as variations of real persons: remember general Gartung, Vlas, peasant Marey or Centenary Lady from *A Writer's Diary*, protagonists of *The Possessed*, they all can be traced to certain figures from newspapers or Dostoevsky's personal correspondence. Thus, that is not a pure information of a strange occasion happened to Dostoevsky but rather a sketch for a plot of how he, Dostoevsky himself, next to turned into a Jew. Initially, he recognized a Jew as a model; then, for many years he had been trying to imitate his. Finally, he failed to distinguish a Russian Orthodox Church from a Synagogue – what's a tricky stylistic task! The letter presents a narrative of how Dostoevsky discovers a Jew inside himself as one of his own variants. After his Wiesbaden 'adventure', Dostoevsky had never gambled any more, as Anna Grigoryevna states in her memoirs. Joseph Frank derives the life-long abstention directly from the mental stress experienced at the Wiesbaden synagogue entrance [Frank 2003, 639].

Dostoevsky and Jews: A 'Far Reading' Sketch

Dostoevsky and Jews: the issue has little freshness. Leaving, at least for a while, aside the letters of Dostoevsky's Jewish reader to the author, the topic emerged at the turn of 1920s and from thenceforth remains an aspect of Dostoevsky Studies. ([Заславский / Zaslavskiy 1923], [Гроссман / Grossman 1924], [Штейнберг / Shteynberg 1928], [Выготский / Vygotskiy 2000], [Гришин / Grishin 1971], [Goldstein 1981], [Morson 1983], [Резник / Reznik 2002], [Frank 2003], [Vassena 2006] [Касаткина / Kasatkina 2007]). Meanwhile, despite the discussion on Dostoevsky's anti-Semitism [Туровская / Turovskaya 2006] or the lack of thereof [Белов / Belov 2002], there are some aspects which remain unclear – primarily, how the narrative is made and how it connects to Dostoevsky's *poetics*, not with the depths of his *psychea* [Morson 1983, 305–306].

The writer's oeuvre, the whole 30 volumes of the Complete Works contain less than 500 usages of "иудей" [Jew(s)] (22), "еврей" / "израильтянин"



[Hebrew(s) / Israeli] (235), and "жид" [Yid(s)] (201). Thus, the total word count of 'Jewish' lexemes represents a tiny layer of Dostoevsky's vocabulary. Maybe, the existing tradition slightly exaggerated the issue for Dostoevsky's personal life or for his art. In any case, it was a strange and conspiracy feeding decision of the Dostoevsky's Vocabulary editors not to include the words into an open part of the *Vocabulary*. [Словарь / Vocabulary 2001–2003]

While already evanescent in quantitative way, Dostoevsky uses the words in the contexts that are set far apart, thus increasing the lexical dispersion for these words.

1. Usages in protagonists' speeches:

"Все переглянулись; Ганя бросился в залу, но и в залу уже вошло несколько человек. – А, вот он, Иуда! – вскрикнул знакомый князю голос [Everybody looked at one another; Ganya dashed into the hall, but several people had already come into it. "Here he is, Judas!" – a voice familiar for the Prince exclaimed.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, VIII, 95]

"у него лежали дома старые серебряные часы, давно уже переставшие ходить. Он схватил их и снес к еврею-часовщику, помещавшемуся в своей лавчонке на базаре. Тот дал за них шесть рублей" (Братья Карамазовы) [...at home, he had a silver clock which – long time ago – failed to run. He grabbed it and carried to a clockmaker, a Hebrew, who was sitting in his kiosk in the bazaar. He gave six rubles for the clock.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XIV, 337]

"Я сама, в легких башмаках, по снегу, бегу к жиду Бумштейну и закладываю мой фермуар – память праведницы, моей матери!" (Дядюшкин Сон). [In light shoes, in the snow, I am running to Bumstein, an Yid, to pawn my clasp, a memory of the righteous person, my mother.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, II, 323]

Due to principles of Dostoevsky's poetics (polyphony), we have cannot treat these usages as the voice of the writer himself. Dostoevsky's protagonists are always connected with real people; mostly, they have some elements of Dostoevsky's mind or personal experience but the protagonists never speak on behalf of the writer. Thus, these usages are those of the protagonists' and trace their attitudes towards Jews as well as prejudices against them. Meanwhile, the problem of intermixing of Dostoevsky's and his protagonists' stances on Jews and Judaism has even never been taken into consideration.

2. Usages From Other Works Of Fiction:

Another part of the Jew-related words usages consists of quotations from different literary sources but mainly from the Bible:

"И многие из иудеев пришли к Марфе и Марии утешать их в печали о брате их. Марфа, услыша, что идет Иисус, пошла навстречу ему; Мария же сидела дома. [And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was



coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house]” [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, VI, 250] – a direct quotation from John 11:19 which was incorporated by Dostoevsky into his novel *Crime and Punishment* in the well-known episode of Sonya reading the New Testament to Raskolnikov.

Sometimes, Dostoevsky next to totally changes a context which surrounds the citation: “А мудрецы и руководители только им поддакивают, иные страха ради иудейского (как-де не пустить его в Америку: в Америку бежать все-таки либерально). [Wise men and leaders constantly agree with them [far-leftists] – some for fear of the Jews (how to prevent someone from fleeing to America while it’s quite liberal to flee to the U.S.)] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXII, 81] “For fear of the Jews” is a citation which was taken from one of the several the Gospel of John fragments – John 7:13, John 19:38, John 20:19. Indeed, the phrase emerges in the new context, thus, it kept too little, if any, links to Jews.

3. *Usages without Direct Reference to Jews:*

In the last two examples, a direct reference to Jews is highly questionable. Their addressees could equally be or not be Jewish. But, Dostoevsky’s oeuvre has many cases when words with denotative meaning ‘a Jew’ refer to an undoubtedly non-Jewish figure: “прямо с капитала начну; чрез пятнадцать лет скажут: “Вот Иволгин, король иудейский... [First of all, I begin to collect capital and in the fifteen years, they will proclaim: THIS IS IVOLGIN THE KING OF THE JEWS]” [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, VIII, 105].

Ganya Ivolgin, a general’s son, has no Jewish roots or relatives. Thus, the formula is based on the New Testament: “And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS” [John 19:19]. Transformed into Ganya’s direct speech about himself and his ideal future, it is quite ironic. The protagonist, a nobody ready to marry for money, compares himself to Jesus. The protagonist, who longs for squeezing into aristocracy, perceives the Roman mocking as a dream.

We know some usages where Dostoevsky mention ‘Jews’ inside a long list alongside with other nations – Poles, Britons, Germans: “убедятся ли они наконец, сколько в этой нигилистине орудует (по моему наблюдению) жидков, а может, и поляков... [Will they finally see (as I do) how many Yids or, maybe, Poles are amidst all those nihilists]” [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXX(1), 43]

Indeed, the negative connotation is present here. But, does Dostoevsky address it to Jews, as such? To Poles, as such? Or, rather, against nihilists – ideological foes of Dostoevsky?

4. *Autoreferential usages:*

It is absolutely not a rarer occasion if the word ‘Jew’ or even ‘Yid’ link to Dostoevsky himself: “...припоминал весь этот год, прошедший для меня так незаметно, припомнил все, все, и грустно мне стало, когда раздумался о судьбе своей. С тех пор я скитаюсь без цели, настоящий Вечный Жид. [I



recollected all this year which had gone so quickly, I remembered everything and I became so upset when took into consideration all my life. From this moment I am wandering without purpose like a true Everlasting Jew]” [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXVIII (1), 188];

“Желаю здоровья. Сам я кашляю, как жид. Твой весь Ф. [I wish you health. Personally, I cough like an Yid. Yours entirely, F.]” [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXX (1), 54]

What we see: surely, Jews and Jewish question were always present in Dostoevsky’s mind. They entered many of his narratives, both his fiction and non-fiction. Meanwhile, the problem of Dostoevsky’s stances on Jews is highly cumbersome. The semantics of the lexical layer which refer to Jews is quite dispersive. We trace much more cases with no direct reference to the people. Thus, it seems that Dostoevsky wrote his defense quite sincerely – “[...] когда и чем заявил я ненависть к еврею как к народу? Так как в сердце моем этой ненависти не было никогда, и те из евреев, которые знакомы со мной и были в сношениях со мной, это знают, то я, с самого начала и прежде всякого слова, с себя это обвинение снимаю. [...when and where I claimed my hate to the people of Israel? Due to my heart has ever been free from the hate and those Hebrews, who are familiar with me or who communicated with me, know this, I decline the indictment totally and from the very beginning.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXV, 75] He admitted that he attacked the “Yids’ tsardom” but he wrote that he had not been aware of how the stock phrase was perceived by his Jewish readers. Maybe, the defence was sincere.

But, we also find how ambivalent are Dostoevsky’s usage of the words [Morson 1983, 308–312]. In what follows we trace the ‘Jewish narrative(s)’ in Dostoevsky’s texts (mainly in his letters & journalism).

A Narrative of a ‘Good Jew’ in Dostoevsky

Dostoevsky’s works contain some positive images of Jews. The most well-known and obvious example is his image of Sophia Lurie:

“...хочу привести теперь одно письмо, уже не анонима, а весьма знакомой мне г-жи Л., очень молодой девицы, еврейки, с которой я познакомился в Петербурге и которая пишет мне теперь из М. С уважаемой мною г-жою Л. мы никогда почти не говорили на тему о “еврейском вопросе”, хотя она, кажется, из строгих и серьезных евреек. [I want to disseminate my friend’s letter. She is a quite young girl, a Jew, not an anonyne. I became familiar with her in St. Petersburg and now, she writes me from M[insk]. I have never discussed the Jewish Question with the highly esteemed miss L., even though it seems to me that she is of a serious and scrupulous Jew type.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXV, 89]

For several years, Dostoevsky perceives Sophia Lurie as next to an ideal



Jew – integrated into Russian social life, highly intellectual and quite modern. Interestingly enough, she is not the sole positive Jewish image in the writer's oeuvre. He pictures ordinary Jewish inhabitants of Minsk with deep liking and even affinity:

“Провожает его <доктора> весь город, звучат колокола всех церквей, поются молитвы на всех языках. Пастор со слезами говорит свою речь над раскрытой могилой. Раввин стоит в стороне, ждет и, как кончил пастор, сменяет его и говорит свою речь и льет те же слезы. Да ведь в это мгновение почти разрешен хоть бы этот самый «еврейский вопрос»! Ведь пастор и раввин соединились в общей любви, ведь они почти обнялись над этой могилой в виду христиан и евреев. [The whole city gives last tribute to the doctor, the bells of all churches are striking, prayers on every language are reciting. With tears, an evangelical pastor says at his open grave. A rabbi stays aside and waits until the pastor finishes and then continues his speech weeping the same bitter tears. The Jewish Question is next to resolved in the moment! Pastor and Rabbi reunited in the spirit of love; at the grave, they next to embraced one another in presence of Christians and Jews.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, 25, 92]

Many years before Dostoevsky met Sophia Lurie, the writer had already encountered Jews and created a Jewish protagonist. This happened in *The House of the Dead*. Isay Bumshtein – who is portrayed as quite a good person: “У него был свой самовар, хороший тюфяк, чашки, весь обеденный прибор. Городские евреи не оставляли его своим знакомством и покровительством. По субботам он ходил под конвоем в свою городскую молельную (что дозволяется законами). [He had a samovar, quality mattress, cups and a full dinner set. Jews residing in that town didn't forget him and patronized him. At Saturdays, he went under police escort to his prayer house in the town (which the law permits)].” [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, IV, 93]

What Isay Bumstein, Jewish residents of Minsk and Sophia Lurie have in common? Probably, all they are the ‘serious Jews’, i.e. quite traditional oriented. In Dostoevsky's texts, such Jews ignite a constant interest to themselves: “Накануне каждой субботы, в пятницу вечером, в нашу казарму нарочно ходили из других казарм посмотреть, как Исай Фомич будет справлять свой шабаш. [Every Saturday eve, at Friday evening, some people deliberately came into our barrack to watch Isay Fomich celebrating his Sabbath.]” [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, IV, 95]

On systematic basis, Dostoevsky esteems Jews who keep traditions and live in an orthodox style: “I do not want to hide that all this was written by a Jew and that all the feelings are Jewish feelings”. The phrase echos some elder statements, for examples, – Kostomarov's:

“Евреи по своей религии, по своим верованиям и надеждам неизбежно должны стоять особняком от той страны, где проживают: иначе они будут переродки, а не Евреи. Со стороны христиан преследовать Евреев – тупая ненависть, сопровождавшаяся фанатизмом часто варварским и бесчело-



вечным. [Due to their religion, beliefs and hopes, Jews have to be inevitably separated from a dominant people of a country where they dwell. Without the separation, they will no more be Jews and turn into a parody. For Christians, to oppress Jews is a stupide hate accompanied with barbarous and cruel zealotry]. [Костомаров / Kostomarov 1862, 57]

Dostoevsky shares the emblematic suspicion of Russian conservatives toward the deeply Russianized Jewry. The writer's ‘Good Jews’ are primarily the true Jews: they follow Jewish rules, they are religious, they pray on a regular basis and, indeed, believe in God. These Jews are mostly not eager to be assimilated.

Sometimes, the social behavior of any Jews, their culture, their manner of communication and speech remain quite strange even if not alien:

“Рядом с моим N в { 1 ”d’Alger“ } , дверь об дверь, живут два богатых жида, мать и ее сын, 25-летний жиденек, – и отравляют мне жизнь: с утра до ночи говорят друг с другом, громко, долго, беспрерывно, ни читать, ни писать не дают. Ведь, уж кажется, она его 25 лет как родила, могла бы с ним наговориться в этот срок, так вот нет же, говорят день и ночь, и не как люди, а по целым страницам (по-немецки или по-жидовски), точно книгу читают: и все это с сквернейшей жидовской интонацией, так что при моем раздражительном состоянии это меня всего измучило. [Near my room, next door, reside two prosperous Yids, a mother and her son, a Jew of 25. Together, they embitter my life: from the very morning till the darkest night they are always chatting to each other – loud, for a long time, unstoppable. They give me no chance to read or write. It seems, 25 years left as she gave birth to him; thus, she could have talked herself out for the term – but no way. They speak all day and night long. They converse not as people typically do but in page long sentences (in German or in Yidden) as if they are reading a book. They produce this with that atrocious Yidden pronunciation. While I am irritable, all this tortured me.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXX (1), 89]

Rather recurrently than constantly, Dostoevsky perceives close interaction with Jews as a personal challenge and indulges himself due to the difficulties:

“Четверо суток как я сидел и терпел их разговоры за дверью <...> Хоть они и русские (богатые) жида, но откуда-то из Зап<адного> края, из Ковно. Так как уже было 10 часов и пора было спать, я и крикнул, {ложась в постель}: ”Ах, эти проклятые жида, когда же дадут спать!“. [Обиделись.]. [For four days I was sitting and tolerating their speech <...>. Even though they are Russian and prosperous Yids, but they are from somewhere in the Western Region, from Kovno. Due to it had already been something past 10 p.m. and it had been the time to go to bed, I roared: Oh, cursed Yids, when do you allow me to sleep?! – They became upset.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXX (1), 93]

The final explosion is nasty. But, the situation is quite satiric – for everybody inflicted into it. For the writer who becomes so angry and nervous [ср.:

Резник / Reznik 2002] that the vocabulary which he uses accents his illness and inadequacy. For the mother and the son who are always talking in loud being not able to stop. Not an enmity toward the family.

A Narrative of a Bad Jew' in Dostoevsky

As many people of his time, Dostoevsky shared prejudices against Jews and, in general, was suspicious of Jewish influence on Russian society, economy, politics etc. It seemed to him, that searching for *gescheft*, Jews were responsible for promotion of alcoholism in Russian low-classes and in peasantry, especially. 'A Jew' and 'a capitalist' were synonyms in Dostoevsky's vocabulary. The words were so interchangeable that on non-occasional basis the writer labeled oligarchs, financiers, manufacturers and merchants of Russian origins as Jews: "Но неужели вы и вправду укажете мне на эту толпу бросившихся на Россию восторжествовавших жидов и жидишек? <...> появились теперь даже и восторженные жида, иудейского и православного исповедания. <...> об них теперь пишут в наших газетах... [Are you really going to show me the mob of exalted Yids who jumped at Russia? <...> well, some exalted Yids of Jewish and Russian Christian rites have recently emerged. <...> Our newspapers informed of them...]" [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXII, 81] As Vladimir Sidorov remarked at the turn of 1920s, in Dostoevsky's vocabulary nations often mean not persons with some common ancestral background but a concept and an idea [Сидоров / Sidorov 1924, 109–116]. Dostoevsky creates 'his' nations as he does with protagonists.

With or without a binding link to real Jews, Dostoevsky sometimes comes into a tough – maybe, even nasty – polemics around the Jewry. Turn to his 'bad Jew' narrative:

"Пишут это "образованные" евреи, то есть из таких, которые (я заметил это, но отнюдь не обобщаю мою заметку, оговариваюсь заранее) – которые всегда как бы постараются дать вам знать, что они, при своем образовании, давно уже не разделяют "предрассудков" своей нации, своих религиозных обрядов не исполняют, как прочие мелкие евреи, считают это ниже своего просвещения, да и в бога, дескать, не веруем. [Jews who call themselves 'educated' write in such [aggressive] manner. ['Educated'] i.e. those who - I noticed the fact but not ready to generalize it – always insist that due to their educational level, they neither share 'prejudices' of their nation nor follow the religious rules which are essential for other 'low' Jews. The Jews perceive religion as somewhat discrediting their enlightenment and... 'we do not believe in any god'.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXV, 74]

Such Jews knew sciences and spoke modern European languages. They thought in a rational way. They were imbued with ideas of the Age of Enlightenment with its perception of traditions and religious rites as somewhat archaic. Summarizing all of the above, the Jews were *maskilim* (in Hebrew – 'the enlighten'), the cultural result of the *Haskalah* – literally, [Jewish] Enlightenment.

They looked at Europe as at their sole home. They believed in transformative significance of European Enlightenment ideas for the whole Jewish community. They felt themselves quite convenient in 18th and 19th century European life and did not evade from social interaction with Christians, though often evading assimilation.

Dostoevsky sees the processes of assimilation: "Купил бумаги (писчей) и перьев гадчайших, заплатил чертову кучу, точно мы где-нибудь на необитаемом острове. Здесь все жида! Даже в наехавшей публике чуть не одна треть разбогатевших жидов со всех концов мира. [I bought some writing-paper and the worst pens, I paid a small fortune for all the stuff as if I were at an uninhabited island. Only Yids are here! Even amidst the holiday-makers, one third, as minimum, are rich Yids from different corners of the world.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXX (1), 89]. Could we be sure that Dostoevsky's 'Yids' here are ethnic Jews? Couldn't they be German profiteers? Couldn't the holidaymakers be Frenchmen or Italians? We can not evade the generalized interpretation with an unambiguous certainty. Whether the 'Jews' are Jews or not is not very important. What is much more intriguing is if Dostoevsky counts the maskilim as Jews. A highly cumbersome question...

Dostoevsky does believe that Jews are and have always been irresistibly connected with the Bible, its plot, its vision, its 'internal world': "слишком даже грешно забывать своего сорокавекового Иегову и отступаться от него. И это далеко не из одного только чувства национальности грешно, а и из других, весьма высокого размера причин. [...it is highly sinful to forget their forty-century Jehovah and to apostatize from Him. It is sinful not due to the reason of national pride but rather due to other, higher grounds.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXV, 75] Even though Dostoevsky does not use the word – and probably does not know it, – for him, a Jew is a person who follows the halacha – Jewish traditional law: "еврей без Бога как-то немислим; еврея без Бога и представить нельзя. Но тема эта из обширных, мы ее пока оставим. [Jews are unthinkable without God; it is impossible to imagine a Jew separated from God. But, the issue is quite serious, thus, we quit it now.]" [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXV, 75] 'Upper-class' Jews – that is a constant vision of Dostoevsky - accept neither God nor halacha; thus, their Jewishness is questionable, while they claim to speak on behalf of every Jew, if not broader: "Кто говорит это? <...> заезжий европеец, корреспондент политической газеты, или образованный какой-нибудь высший еврей из тех, что не веруют в бога и которых вдруг у нас так много теперь расплодилось. [Who avers this? <...> A stranger from Europe? A political observer? An educated and upper-class Jew from those who do not believe in God and who are in a huge numbers in the today Russia.] [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXV, 69]

Based on the attitude towards the progressive Jewry, Dostoevsky gives Sophia Lurie the advice on her anticipated marriage:

"35 и 19 лет мне не кажутся большой разницей, вовсе даже нет. Не знаю по-



чему, но мне бы самому, лично, хотелось, чтоб этот человек Вам поправился, так чтоб Вы вышли замуж! Одно Вы не написали: какого он закона? Еврей? Если еврей, то как же он надворный советник? Мне кажется, евреи только слишком недавно получили право получать чины. Чтоб быть же надворным советником, надо служить по крайней мере 15 лет. [35 and 19, I do not see this a big age difference. Absolutely not. I do not know why, but personally, I want you loving the man and marrying him! But, you did not write me one detail. Which law does he follow? He is Jewish, isn't he? If he is, how he became a court councillor [nadvorny sovetnik]? It seems me, Jews have only recently obtained the rank rights. To reach the status, someone should be in service not less than 15 years.]” [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXIX (2), 147]

Dostoevsky does not want so that Sophia Lurie – the ‘role model’ – becomes a wife of a Christian, Jewish convert into Christianity or a deeply assimilated Jew.

For Dostoevsky, a devoted Christian, the advice is quite odd.

Here, we encounter with another issue, important for Dostoevsky but *prima facie* far from the Jewish Question:

“Еще до Петра, при московских еще царях и патриархах, один тогдашний молодой московский франт, из передовых, надел французский костюм и к боку прицепил европейскую шпагу. Мы именно должны были начать с презрения к своему и к своим <...>. И чего же мы достигли? Результатов странных <...>. Кончилось тем, что они прямо обозвали нас врагами и будущими сокрушителями европейской цивилизации. <...> Как же быть? Стать русскими во-первых и прежде всего. <...>. Став самими собой, мы получим наконец облик человеческий, <...> свободного существа, а не раба, <...> нас сочтут тогда за людей, а не за международную обшмыгу, не за стрюцких европеизма, либерализма и социализма. [Where did you begin? <...> You began with nonsensical wagabonding; you tried to become Europeans, in order to imitate them <...> Before Peter the Great, at the times of Russian Tsars and Patriarchs, a young Moscow dandy, who believed he was well ahead of his time, puts on a French suit and donnes a European rapier <...> What did we get? Europeans called us enemies and potential smashers of European civilization. <...> What shall we do? To become the Russians, first of all. <...> Becoming what we are, we will obtain a human image, <...> an image of a free being not of a slave, <...> they will perceive us as humans, not as an occasionally mixed mob of self-proclaimed pseudo-Europeans, pseudo-Liberals and pseudo-Socialists.]” [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXV, 21–22]

Dostoevsky looks at the ‘Jewish street’ through lenses of the Westernization. Thus, he sees in a Jew who tries to become Russian absolutely the same situation as if a Russian tries to convert into a European. The writer does not believe in meaningfulness and usefulness of such conversions – generally speaking, in the decline of traditions for progress. A human person for him is always a social being who literally and entirely grows up inside a community (or a nation) –



from its language [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXIII, 79] or even from a soil [Достоевский / Dostoevskiy 1972–1990, XXIII, 95–96]). Inside the native social environment, every person receives their first moral lessons – ‘German witz’, Russian affinity to ‘big tents’, Jewish religious stubbornness... That is why Dostoevsky sees the sole result of the deviation from traditions in a rise of consumerism and far-left movements as a protest movement. The secular ‘global village’ consisted of entirely liberated individuals is somewhat Dostoevsky refuses to accept. Meanwhile, the affinity for the globalization he recognizes both in Russian Westernizers and in the progressive, ‘educated’ Jews.

The writer quite sincerely opposed the indictments in his old-fashion Judeophobia (“Judas betrayed Christ” [ср: Trachtenberg 1943]) – the singular version of Anti-Semitism he recognized. Dostoevsky’s narratives show no *hate* based on religious ground. He felt some sympathy to the ‘merry old Jews’.

Meanwhile, the split of Jewish community into ‘orthodoxes’ and ‘maskilim’ had an impact on Dostoevsky’s works (as well as on Russian conservative thought, in general). Maybe due to his polyphonic poetics with its demand for tracing the ‘idea’ in every ‘nation’, Dostoevsky constructed and interconnected ‘a secular Jew’ and ‘a capitalist’. Thus, stepping aside from the traditional Anti-Semitism, the writer – highly likely unintentionally – enhanced the narrative schema of the new one, based on conspiracies concerning excessive Jewish influence in economics, their organic inclination to capitalism and their role in exploitation of workers. For Garry Morson and many other scholars the statements are a clear trait of Dostoevsky’s prejudices against the Jews [Morson 1983, 317]; but, the writer refused to recognize the ‘new secular Jewry’ as Jews, as such. He believed that everybody, including himself, can turn into a declassed individual who lost relations with his or her own nation, or into an ‘Yid’ in Dostoevsky’s meaning. Thus, Dostoevsky was not aware of the narrative complex as somewhat igniting a hate against a Jew and provoking an Anti-Semitism of a new kind as he had no experience of living in the 20th century.

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Prokhorov George S., State University for the Humanities and Social Studies.

Dr. Habil. in Philology, Full Professor at the Department of Literature, Philological Faculty. Research interests: theory of literature, literary journalism, Old Russian literature, Dostoevsky.

E-mail: hoshea.prokhorov@gmail.com

Прохоров Георгий Сергеевич, Государственный социально-гуманитарный университет.

Доктор филологических наук, профессор кафедры литературы филологического факультета. Научные интересы: теория литературы, художественная публицистика, древнерусская литература, Достоевский.

E-mail: hoshea.prokhorov@gmail.com